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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 27th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MUNTASSER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 107: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued) (A/46/6/Rev.1 and A/46/7)

AGENDA ITEM 108: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/46/16 and Add.1, A/46/173 and A/46/330)

First reading (continued)

Section 23. Economic Commission for Africa (continued)

1. Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria) said that her delegation supported the programmes for African economic recovery and development and believed that the high level of resource allocation and 2.7 per cent rate of real growth in section 23 were justified. It was confident that ECA would use the resources made available to it in an efficient and effective manner to achieve the greatest possible benefit.

2. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that his delegation also wished to express its support for programmes for the economic development and recovery of Africa and its appreciation of the acute difficulties facing that continent, regarding which representatives of African States had already spoken in the Committee with sincerity and eloquence. It was important to recognize, however, that resources available through the regular budget were finite and there was no more challenging task for the Fifth Committee than to choose between competing claims on those resources and to ensure that they were used to maximum effect. Concerning suggestions that the Secretary-General's proposals either in section 23 or elsewhere in the budget submission might not be adequate, his delegation would prefer, in the interests of a consensus, to proceed systematically on the basis of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, which was the competent technical body to consider such matters. It therefore reserved the right to comment on any proposals for the allocation of resources, on the basis of political considerations, in excess of the Secretary-General's submission as endorsed or modified by the Advisory Committee.

3. While his delegation had some misgivings, it could support the proposals regarding both the multinational programming and operational centres (MULPOCs) and training activities, but hoped that general agreement could be reached through informal consultations to provide for effective monitoring of and reporting on those reconstituted programmes. As to the method of funding for the Pan-African Documentation and Information System (PADIS) and the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), his delegation did not wish to see their activities weakened by disputes about mandated expenditures but expected that the divergent views in that regard would also be taken into account in the informal discussions.

(Mr. Kinchen, United Kingdom)

4. With respect to the concerns expressed regarding extrabudgetary resources, it should be remembered that the Secretariat's practice was quite justifiably to make conservative estimates and that, in the case of ECA, the projected $30.3 million in extrabudgetary expenditures for 1990-1991 had later been revised upwards to $37.2 million, an increase of nearly 25 per cent in nominal terms. Similarly, the estimated contribution from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had been revised upwards from $11.6 million to $19.2 million, representing an even more substantial rise. The lower projections for resources that would become available from UNDP in 1992-1993, as compared with the current biennium, could no doubt be explained with reference to the decisions taken by the UNDP Governing Council on revised arrangements for execution of UNDP-funded activities. In that regard, his delegation's understanding was that there would be an increase, and not a decrease, in UNDP's resource allocation for projects relating to Africa; the resources would simply be used in a different way from before, with less being channelled through ECA and other regional bodies and greater reliance being placed on national execution. Thus, section 23 by no means reflected the totality of United Nations or other resources devoted to African economic recovery and development.

5. Much of the discussion in the Committee had centred on the question of growth rates as a test of how far budget sections reflected priorities. His delegation, however, was increasingly convinced that the methodology for calculating growth in recurrent expenditures was producing results that were misleading or even meaningless. A more useful indicator might be the number of posts on the staffing table. In the case of ECA, the rate of post reductions applied in accordance with General Assembly resolution 41/213 had been among the lowest for any section and the staffing level had since been raised so that there were currently 596 regular budget posts and 175 extrabudgetary posts for a sizeable total of 771.

6. In any event, the real point at issue was surely whether the Fifth Committee was satisfied that resources would be used to optimum effect. It had been suggested that ECA was being left on the periphery of efforts to deal with the African crisis but his delegation trusted that the Commission would have a more central role. It was important to ensure that its meetings, seminars and other activities contributed effectively to dealing with that crisis while bearing in mind that regular budget funding was necessarily limited.

7. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), replying to questions raised during the discussion, observed that many delegations had sought information about changes in the ECA programme of work. Generally speaking, the current presentation of the proposed programme budget allowed the Secretariat to indicate only the form, and not the content, of programmatic changes. The same comment applied to the question of priorities. Innovation might be considered in consultation with the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

(Mr. Baudot)

8. The question raised by the representative of Ethiopia concerning the proposed shift of resources away from social sectors within the ECA programme in part reflected the problem of presentation. In fact, only one P-5 post was to be redeployed. The Secretariat was endeavouring to ensure the best possible use of resources and took note of the recommendation in the CPC report (A/46/16, para. 312) that there should be no adverse impact in the programme delivery in that sector.

9. Regarding the impact of the translator/précis-writer training programme on temporary assistance requirements, he could not provide an exact figure for the time being. The question of full translation and interpretation services would, of course, continue to receive attention but it was not currently economical to establish such services on a permanent basis at Addis Ababa.

10. With regard to the decline in support from the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), $90,000 had been provided in 1990-1991 for two seminars but it was not envisaged that similar activities would be financed by UNIDO in 1992-1993. More information on that subject would be given during the informal consultations.

11. In response to the comments made by the United Kingdom representative, he confirmed that the apparent decline in UNDP funding for ECA projects merely reflected a different distribution of the total resources available. He did, however, recognize that a detailed breakdown would be useful for informal discussions on that fundamental issue.

12. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the conclusions and recommendations of CPC regarding section 23 contained in paragraphs 310 to 314 of its report (A/46/16).

13. It was so decided.

14. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of $67,089,800 under section 23 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 was approved in first reading, on the understanding that the issues raised in connection with section 23 would be considered in informal consultations and any necessary adjustments made.

Section 24. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

15. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) said that the conclusions and recommendations of CPC on section 24 referred basically to priorities. The question of the large number of high priority designations had been raised. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) had approved the priority designations at the subprogramme level; CPC recommended that it should review them at the output level and should continue its efforts to evaluate its publications.

16. Mr. ZARI-ZARRE (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the resources allocated to ESCAP were insufficient in comparison with those allocated to other regional commissions. Extrabudgetary resources were not a sufficient substitute means of financing the Commission's activities.

17. Mr. GREGG (Australia) said that his delegation supported the CPC conclusions and recommendations. As a member of ESCAP his country took a special interest in the efficiency and, what was more important, the effectiveness of the Commission's activities. A direct relationship did not necessarily exist between resource allocations and useful outputs. The question was really how well ESCAP served the interests of the region as reflected in the priorities established by intergovernmental bodies. At recent ESCAP meetings there had been some agreement on the priorities now set out in section 24.6 of the proposed programme budget, but the estimates did not reflect the balance of those priorities. In CPC his delegation had tried unsuccessfully to obtain an explanation for the proposed distribution of resources. It continued to object to the provision of additional resources in real terms for activities not accorded high priority by Member States. There was considerable scope for rationalization of ESCAP activities, for it was not making the most effective use of its resources. Australia was not convinced that the proposed increases for support activities and the new posts were justified.

18. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the conclusions and recommendations of CPC regarding section 24 contained in paragraphs 323 to 326 of its report (A/46/16).

19. It was so decided.

20. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of $47,450,700 under section 24 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 was approved in first reading, on the understanding that the issues raised in connection with section 24 would be considered in informal consultations and any necessary adjustments made.

Section 25. Economic Commission for Europe

21. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that, as the Advisory Committee had pointed out, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) had seriously re-examined its role in the light of the changing situation in Europe and had identified the five priority areas mentioned in paragraph 25.3 of the ACABQ report (A/46/7). Paragraph 25.5 of the report set out the many proposed redeployments resulting from the analysis made by the ECE secretariat, but the redeployments did not always correspond to the priority areas identified by ECE. It was not clear why a net addition was proposed to the staffing table, since in its decision O (45) the Commission had said that additional human resources would be provided from within its current budget and that all activities not identified as priorities might have to work in some cases within the context of diminished resources.

22. Mr. PANOV (Bulgaria) said that his delegation attached particular importance to the activities of ECE and to its own participation in them. The new priorities established by the Commission fully corresponded to his country's concerns and would help to ensure better use of resources. The changes in the Commission's structure and methods would also enhance the efficiency of its activities. The degree of success achieved in those two areas would largely determine the future role of ECE in the development of European cooperation. Its activities should be carried out in close coordination with all the relevant international organizations. His delegation fully supported the conclusions and recommendations of CPC on the section.

23. Mr. MORCZINSKI (Poland) noted that the programme of work of ECE was aimed at strengthening coordination and promoting international economic cooperation in the region. The Commission should focus its attention on the transformation and integration of the economies of the countries that were currently in transition. Its assistance was particularly important for those countries in view of the difficulties which they were encountering with respect both to the traditional Soviet market and to access to the market of the European Community. His delegation fully supported the proposals contained in section 25.

24. Mr. GOUDIMA (Ukraine) said that his delegation attached importance to the ECE activities designed to strengthen coordination and promote international economic cooperation in the region. Table 25.3 in the budget document showed an overall rate of real growth of 1.3 per cent and hardly reflected the large volume of work planned for the Commission. The figures did testify to the effort made by the Commission to reorder its priorities, but his delegation could not agree in all cases with the apportionment of resources among the various programmes and subprogrammes. In particular it had doubts about the reductions in the rate of real growth of the energy subprogramme by 13.5 per cent, in science and technology by 33.8 per cent, and in international trade and development finance by 1.8 per cent. Against that background, the increase of 37.4 per cent under executive direction and management was puzzling.

25. His delegation supported the Commission's intention to increase expenditure on its environment subprogramme by 22.9 per cent in real terms. The subprogramme was a vital one for Ukraine because of its serious environmental situation. His delegation was grateful in particular for the Commission's participation in the efforts to mitigate the effects of the Chernobyl accident and it hoped that the Chernobyl problem would be reflected in future programmes of work. It also attached importance to subprogramme 1 (Development issues and policies), which included measures for the economic development of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and assistance with their economic reforms during the transitional period. The reference under subprogramme 6 (International trade and development finance) to the creation of more favourable conditions for foreign direct investment was welcome, and his delegation stressed the importance in subprogramme 9 (Transport,

(Mr. Goudima, Ukraine)

communications and tourism) of the activities connected with the transport of dangerous goods. The proposal made in paragraph 25.56 for the establishment of an additional post to service the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods was justified.

26. Despite some shortcomings, the proposed programme budget for ECE, subject to the changes recommended by the Advisory Committee, was fully justified and had his delegation's support.

27. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the conclusion and recommendation of CPC regarding section 25 contained in paragraph 334 of its report (A/46/16).

28. It was so decided.

29. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of $41,080,900 under section 25 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 was approved in first reading, on the understanding that the issues raised in connection with section 25 would be considered in informal consultations and any necessary adjustments made.

Section 26. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

30. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that a question had been raised about the accuracy of the forecasts of extrabudgetary resources and the different policy for the United Nations Devlopment Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in the region. The figures given in table 26.1, which showed a significant decline in the operational projects of UNDP and UNFPA, were accurate to the best of the Secretariat's knowledge and reflected a considerable change in the way in which the two organizations would operate in the region.

31. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) noted that in paragraph 338 of its report CPC recommended two changes in the programme narrative of section 26.

32. Mr. MEZZALAMA (Italy) said that his delegation endorsed the positive judgement of CPC on the proposals made under section 26. It was particularly aware of the difficult tasks facing the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in helping all the countries of the region to develop the basic requirements of their structures and policies, a point stressed in paragraphs 33.85 and 33.86 of the medium-term plan. Accordingly, his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's proposals, which confirmed the principle that rational and effective utilization of staff could be the best way to deal with changing circumstances. Since a decline in extrabudgetary funds was anticipated for the biennium, it was to be hoped that the joint unit of ECLAC and the Centre on Transnational Corporations would succeed in attracting foreign investments. The present situation made it all the more important for the proposed appropriations to be approved.

33. Mr. BAZAN (Chile), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that the format of the budget document reflected the interests of the region and its priorities. The volume of resources proposed for ECLAC was acceptable, although the anticipated decline in extrabudgetary resources was regrettable. Perhaps the Secretariat could give information about the practical consequences of that decline for the work of ECLAC.

34. Despite the enormous effort which it had made in recent years, the region was still facing serious economic and social problems. In that connection, the Rio Group recognized the importance of the work done by the regional commissions and by ECLAC in particular. It endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of CPC on the section, particularly the recommendation concerning economic integration and cooperation, a process which was gaining ground in the region. ECLAC should in fact incorporate in its programme a topic devoted exclusively to integration matters. The Rio Group would be reluctant to see any reduction in science and technology activities and it stressed the importance of the inclusion of tourism as a subregional activity in the Caribbean.

35. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), responding to the question put by the representative of Chile, said that all he could say at the present stage was that one consequence of the decline in extrabudgetary resources would be the cancellation from January 1992 of one third of the UNFPA posts, i.e. ten out of 30, providing support for the Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE). He would try to give fuller information in the informal consultations.

36. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the conclusions and recommendations of CPC regarding section 26 contained in paragraphs 338 and 339 of its report (A/46/16).

37. It was so decided.

38. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount $71,809,700 under section 26 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 was approved in first reading, on the understanding that the issues raised in connection with section 26 would be considered in informal consultations and any necessary adjustments made.

Section 27. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

39. The CHAIRMAN, replying to a question from Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands), suggested that the Committee should defer its consideration of section 27 in view of the fact that, as indicated in the Advisory Committee's report (A/46/7, para. 27.1), the resources for that section had been included in the proposed programme budget for 1992-1993 at the maintenance level, on the understanding that a proposed programme of work and detailed resource justifications would be prepared at a later stage.

40. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) pointed out that section 27 of the budget document actually contained only five tables and there was no breakdown of programmes and subprogrammes or programme narrative. He had been informed that revised estimates had already been prepared and would be submitted to the Fifth Committee through the Advisory Committee, which would issue a corresponding addendum to its report on the proposed programme budget.

41. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that he could confirm the information provided to the Advisory Committee and fully expected that the relevant budget documentation would be available by the following week.

42. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that his delegation was satisfied by the Secretariat's assurances that the revised estimates would be provided to the Committee through ACABQ in time for it to complete its first reading of the proposed programme budget.

43. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Committee would defer its consideration of section 27 until the revised estimates and other documentation had been received.

44. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) said that since the Committee was concluding for the moment its first reading of the sections concerning the regional economic commissions, he repeated the request which he had made at the 25th meeting that the Chairman of the Advisory Committee comment further on the application of the general reduction recommended by the Advisory Committee to a number of regional commissions.

45. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that in his introductory comments on section 23 at the 25th meeting he had also commented on the Advisory Committee's recommendation not to apply the general reduction to the regional economic commissions. After further discussion the Advisory Committee had concluded that, since ECE enjoyed a considerable amount of support from the United Nations Office at Geneva, it would be fair to apply some general reduction to that Commission. Paragraph 25.2 of the ACABQ report mentioned the administration, conference and general services support for ECE, which was conservatively estimated at $32.4 million. The sum of that figure and the actual expenses for 1988-1989 of about $31.9 million gave a conservative idea of the resources available to ECE. The Advisory Committee had therefore concluded that part of the general reduction applicable to the United Nations Office at Geneva, a total of $137,300, should be reapportioned to ECE. Such a small amount should not be detrimental to the Commission's programme of work.

Section 28. Human rights

46. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that one reason for the budget growth proposed under section 28 was the creation of a D-2 post, the incumbent of which would be Director and Deputy to the Head of the Centre for Human Rights. Apart from its Head, the Centre had no other posts above the D-1 level. A number of redeployments were also proposed, including one D-1 post from executive direction and management to the Technical and Information Branch.

47. The estimate for the Centre included $1.5 million for preparations for the World Conference on Human Rights. The Third Committee had before it the report of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, and the Secretariat would shortly be presenting a statement of the financial implications of that report. If the amount involved was higher than $1.5 million, the contingency fund procedure would come into play.

48. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that not every member of the Advisory Committee was happy with the recommendations that it was making in an effort to assist the Fifth Committee to reach an understanding. The recommendations were in fact a compromise. In various paragraphs of its report, the Committee proposed that the additional posts requested by the Secretary-General should be established on a temporary basis, giving its reasons in each case. He did not expect everyone to accept the Advisory Committee's reasoning and it was understandable if some did not, because the question of human rights posts was an issue on which many Member States had different points of view.

49. In the case of the posts requested in connection with the International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (A/46/7, para. 28.9), he wished to make it clear that the Advisory Committee was not rejecting the Secretary-General's proposals. It was simply saying that the posts should be established when the Convention entered into force, because it had been informed that only one of the required 20 ratifications had materialized so far. In the Advisory Committee's opinion, it was unlikely that the total of 20 ratifications would be received in 1992. The Advisory Committee was therefore recommending that the posts should be created but that funding should be discounted, so that resources would be provided as from 1993.

50. With reference to the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, the figure of $1.5 million included in the estimate for the Centre for Human Rights in respect of preparations for the Conference was the same as that communicated to the Advisory Committee and the General Assembly in 1990. The Advisory Committee would re-examine the figure in the light of the results of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference.

51. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) said that the question of the creation of additional posts was one to which the general recommendation of CPC that such action required more justification appeared to be applicable. The CPC recommended approval of the programme narrative of section 28.

52. Mrs. ANZOLA (Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Human Rights had approved a decision on the holding of regional conferences, as part of the preparatory process, whose financing would be considered as part of the budget for the Conference. The Rio Group countries would like an assurance that when the figure of $1.5 million mentioned in paragraph 28.35 of the proposed programme budget was reviewed, the financing of regional conferences as part of the preparatory process would be included.

53. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) said that his delegation strongly supported United Nations human rights programmes and was disappointed that the proposed programme budget allocated such a small percentage of resources to them. A significant portion of the proposed real growth in section 28 related to the conversion of funds for temporary staff whose posts were to be established. The conversion would not increase the level of staff supporting activities relating to Special Rapporteurs and fact-finding, but the establishment of permanent posts should eliminate some of the recruitment difficulties facing the Centre in that area. As there was a need to ensure sufficient temporary assistance for such activities, his delegation would like to have confirmation that some of the resources allocated to the Centre for temporary assistance would be available for short-term personnel to assist the Special Rapporteurs.

54. His delegation supported the Advisory Committee's recommendations, particularly those concerning the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus. It would like to have details on the progress made by that Committee and an explanation why its expenses were included in section 28. As the Committee had been established on the initiative of the Secretary-General, it might be desirable to transfer its budget to section 1, which would permit better supervision of its activities and expenditures. His delegation would appreciate a response from the Secretariat on those two points.

55. The most recent United Nations Yearbook on Human Rights to be issued covered the year 1985. An effort was needed to reduce the backlog. His delegation wished to know which volumes the Secretariat planned to publish during 1992-1993. Publication of the Yearbook was clearly a low priority and the resources allocated to it should be reduced in view of the very important work of the Centre and its increasing workload in other areas. Another possible saving could be made by eliminating the production of wall charts and calendars projected in paragraph 28.22 of the proposed programme budget.

56. In conclusion, his delegation had to express its reservations about a number of activities conducted by the Centre. It did not believe that the

(Mr. Cohen, United States)

work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories would contribute to solving the problems of the Middle East. With regard to the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, his delegation's practice was not to participate in any decisions relating to its work programme or budget.

57. Mr. LEV (Israel) said that his delegation was against the activities of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories and objected to the proposed appropriation for them. The resources allocated for that Committee could be better used for other purposes.

58. Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba) said that his delegation supported all human rights activities except those undertaken for political purposes. It wanted more resources for collective human rights activities and greater efforts to protect the economic and social rights of people suffering from lack of resources. Deprivation caused a great deal of suffering in developed and developing countries alike.

59. In view of the fact that human rights, despite their great importance, were not among the five priorities set for the next biennium, his delegation was surprised at the proposals in section 28 for real growth of 10.9 per cent and the establishment of 17 new posts at the Centre for Human Rights. It could not understand the latter proposal in particular, because the previous session of the General Assembly had stated that approval for such posts would depend on the Secretariat's analysis of the Centre's workload, which was still not available. Unless the Secretariat could provide an explanation, his delegation would be unable to accept the proposal to establish 17 new posts and also, therefore, the proposed distribution of resources, even in first reading. There was a considerable imbalance in the distribution of resources, with two subprogrammes accounting for over 76 per cent of the total while others received little. His delegation trusted that there would be a thorough discussion of that problem during the informal consultations.

60. His delegation's ultimate position on the provision for the World Conference on Human Rights would depend on the report from the first session of the Preparatory Committee. It hoped that the necessary decisions would be taken and that the financing of regional preparatory conferences would be included. Meanwhile, it could not approve the estimate even on a provisional basis.

61. Ms. ROEDSMOEN (Norway), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that they attached immense importance to United Nations human rights activities. Because expectations of those activities had grown considerably, the Nordic countries were greatly concerned at the lack of adequate resources for the Centre for Human Rights. The justifications for the proposed growth in section 28 were reasonable and were further strengthened by the report of

(Ms. Roedsmoen, Norway)

the Secretary-General in document A/46/603, with its references to the Centre's increased workload and the new mandates established since the budget proposals were completed.

62. The Centre's growing workload was most apparent in such areas as the activities of human rights treaty-monitoring bodies and the handling of complaints under the procedures governed by Economic and Social Council resolution 1503 (XLVIII) and the Optional Protocol. In addition, increased activities related to the Programme of Action for the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination had not been matched by an increase in regular resources, and requests for advisory services and technical assistance had grown considerably. Long-term solutions must be found, on the basis of a plan endowed with adequate resources.

63. Because additional temporary assistance was still very necessary, especially in such areas as fact-finding and special procedures arising from decisions of human rights bodies, the Nordic countries did not agree with the Advisory Committee's recommendation to reduce the provision for general temporary assistance by a further $188,100. They welcomed the conversion of some temporary posts but the Centre still suffered from understaffing and the existing difficult situation would remain virtually unchanged unless more personnel could be assigned on a temporary basis until a solution was found.

64. In conclusion, section 28 had suffered more than its fair share of the across-the-board cuts recommended by the Advisory Committee. The Nordic countries did not believe that the history of underutilized resources in the human rights and humanitarian affairs section during previous bienniums could justify the size of the proposed general cuts. The United Nations must respond to international concern about human rights and the increasing workload resulting from the legal obligations undertaken by Member States by securing adequate resources for United Nations human rights activities.

65. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the Twelve States members of the European Community, said that they believed the Secretary-General's proposals in section 28 to be a step in the right direction but questioned whether they addressed the structural problem of adequate staffing of the Centre for Human Rights. The report of the Secretary-General in document A/46/603 confirmed the increasing workload on the Centre resulting from the demands of Member States. The Twelve believed that the increase made longer-term solutions urgently necessary. They would therefore like some clarification from the Secretariat with respect to paragraph 28.5 in the Advisory Committee's report, in view of the establishment of new mandates since completion of the budget proposals.

66. The Twelve were very concerned by the staffing situation at the Centre, certain sections of which faced shortages that were not reflected in section 28. Existing treaty bodies had been facing constraints for a long time and the newly established Committee on the Rights of the Child would need

(Mr. Spaans, Netherlands)

adequate resources to deal with a potentially rapid increase in its workload. It was also questionable whether the need for additional human resources to handle complaints under the Optional Protocol and other treaty-based procedures had been addressed. According to the report of the Secretary-General (A/46/603, para. 12), the proposals did not take account of the additional workload resulting from decisions taken at the forty-seventh session of the Commission on Human Rights. The resources required as a result of those decisions should be taken into account in the budget proposals and, again, the Twelve would be grateful for information from the Secretariat about how that affected the statement in paragraph 28.5 of the Advisory Committee's report.

67. Another respect in which the budget proposals did not appear to reflect the needs of the Centre was that of the Special Procedures Section, and there were problems of understaffing in areas of activity related to the prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities and vulnerable groups. The Centre's increasing workload in respect of advisory services and technical assistance also required additional human and financial resources.

68. In real terms, the growth rate of 10.9 per cent over the revised estimates for 1990-1991 was not so impressive. Moreover, the growth included the four posts approved by the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session and mentioned in the Advisory Committee's report (para. 28.10). The Twelve considered that the proposals in section 28 should be urgently supplemented by proposals that addressed the Centre's short-term and long-term resource problems. At the same time, they agreed with the Advisory Committee's recommendations for reductions in costs related to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

69. The Twelve questioned the inclusion of section 28 among those covered by the Advisory Committee's recommendations for general reductions totalling $145,300, if other sections were exempted. Furthermore, they could not accept the recommendation for a reduction of $188,100 in general temporary assistance (A/46/7, para. 28.15), because the Advisory Committee failed to provide any justification for it. The entire provision for general temporary assistance was necessary for the activities programmed, which could not be undertaken without the means to implement them. The amounts involved were relatively small and the effectiveness of the Centre would be seriously impaired if the recommended reductions were endorsed.

70. In conclusion, the Twelve would address the issue of resources for the World Conference on Human Rights when the Secretariat had provided the additional information expected.

71. Mr. KARBUCZKY (Hungary) said that his delegation regretted that human rights had not been included among the five priorities identified by the General Assembly. His Government attached the greatest importance to human rights questions, and, accordingly, to section 28 of the proposed programme budget.

72. With regard to paragraph 28.12 of the Advisory Committee's report, he asked for an explanation of the background to the situation, and why the Advisory Committee had approved the posts referred to in paragraph 28.13 on a temporary basis only. In paragraph 28.15 the Advisory Committee had recommended a reduction in general temporary assistance of $188,100. His delegation did not think that any reduction in temporary assistance was acceptable, since it provided flexibility in priority areas, such as the administration of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Advisory Services and Technical Assistance in the Field of Human Rights, the operation of which had been hampered by a lack of staff. Estimates under section 28 accounted for only 4 per cent of the total, a modest amount given the importance of human rights questions and the increased workload of the Centre for Human Rights. His delegation agreed with earlier speakers that there was an urgent need to find a long-term solution to the problem of adequate staffing for the Centre.

73. Mr. ELDEEB (Egypt) said that all delegations thought the question of human rights important, given which the Committee might bear in mind the new developments that had taken place since the end of the cold war. For example, his delegation considered the work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories to be extremely important. The General Assembly and Security Council had adopted many resolutions indicating the role to be played by the Organization in protecting the human rights of the Palestinian people, and it was important to support programmes to that end under the regular budget. It was not enough to rely on extrabudgetary resources. His delegation hoped that the Fifth Committee would take account of the importance of those activities in considering section 28.

74. Mr. ONWUALIA (Nigeria) said that his delegation supported the work of the Centre for Human Rights. Nevertheless he noted that growth for activities under section 28 was higher than for those relating to development, to which the Assembly had given priority. His delegation would comment on the question of staffing in the informal consultations.

75. Mr. WU Gang (China) said that adequate resources were needed under section 28, but his delegation was sceptical with regard to the real rate of growth of 10.9 per cent and the proposed establishment of 17 new posts, in comparison with the growth rates proposed under areas identified as priorities. Specifically he questioned the need for new posts at the Centre for Human Rights, given that additional posts had been authorized in the previous biennium.

76. His delegation concurred in the Advisory Committee's comments in paragraph 28.9 of its report concerning posts in respect of the International

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Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. He noted that expenditures arising in connection with the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 would be considered following submission of the report of the Preparatory Committee, which should also deal with the cost of holding regional meetings.

77. Mr. BELHAJ (Tunisia) said that his delegation regretted the failure to identify human rights as a priority area, and considered section 28 to be of great importance. He understood that the question of establishing posts under section 28 would be considered in the informal consultations to be held on the establishment of posts in general, and that the question of the workload of the Centre for Human Rights would also be dealt with in informal consultations.

78. His delegation concurred in the view of the Advisory Committee regarding the World Conference on Human Rights. His delegation also supported funding for the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, since human rights could not be enforced selectively. Obviously once the occupied territories were no longer occupied there would be no need for such funding, and in that connection his delegation hoped that recent political initiatives would bear fruit. He trusted that the Committee would reach a consensus on section 28 in a spirit of flexibility.

79. Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria) said that the financial implications of the rate of real growth of 10.9 per cent were limited given that the resource base under section 28 was small. The growth was accounted for by the establishment of new posts, which her delegation fully supported. In particular, she noted the proposal to convert four Professional and four General Service posts from general temporary assistance to established posts, in connection with activities that were recurrent but approved on a time-limited basis, but was of the view that the proposal might make it impossible for the Centre for Human Rights to continue its activities in the area of fact-finding, missions and special procedures at the current work level. If that proved to be the case, her delegation would prefer the funding of the eight posts from additional resources rather than by means of conversion from general temporary assistance. In that connection she could not accept the reduction in general temporary assistance proposed by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 28.15 of its report.

80. The Advisory Committee's proposals for the establishment of posts in connection with the International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families were acceptable. She observed that the estimates for the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus were the same in real terms as in the previous biennium. While noting that that Committee had not yet submitted the workload analysis requested of it, her delegation did not support the de facto freezing of its resources. Lastly, she would comment on the funding for the World Conference on Human Rights once specific estimates were available.

81. Mr. GREGG (Australia) said that his delegation endorsed the comments made by the representatives of Norway and the Netherlands with regard to the importance of human rights issues. Despite the difficulty of reconciling divergent views on such questions, he trusted that it would be possible to reach a compromise on section 28.

82. Ms. BEAULIEU (Canada) said that her delegation also endorsed the statements made by Norway and the Netherlands. Her delegation would comment in the informal consultations on the issues raised.

83. Ms. DOWSETT (New Zealand) said that it was essential for the Centre for Human Rights to have the necessary resources given the importance of human rights programmes. Accordingly her delegation supported the appropriations proposed under section 28. The reductions recommended by the Advisory Committee under the section must be reconsidered. Nevertheless, her delegaton accepted the Advisory Committee's comments in paragraphs 28.9, 28.16, 28.17 and 28.20 of its report, concerning the International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus.

84. Mr. RAE (India) said that activities on human rights, while important, should not be funded at the expense of other activities of equal importance. Although human rights questions were not among the five priorities, section 28 had the highest rate of real growth, at 10.9 per cent, in the proposed programme budget, while extrabudgetary resources under the section would increase by some 30 per cent.

85. With regard to the Advisory Committee's comments in respect of the proposed redeployment of a D-1 post from Executive direction and management to the Technical and Information Branch and the establishment of a D-2 post under Executive direction and management (A/46/7, para. 28.7), his delegation did not see that there was a need for each branch to be headed by a chief at the D-1 level or for there to be a D-2 Deputy to the Head of the Centre for Human Rights. With respect to the International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, there was no need for posts to be filled prior to entry into force of the Convention. He asked what the Secretariat's expectation of the date of entry into force was. Concerning the proposed establishment of posts in connection with the increased work of the communications procedures section, his delegation preferred to await the Secretary-General's management and workload analysis before supporting the request, but could concur in the Advisory Committee's recommendation regarding the conversion of eight posts from general temporary assistance. Lastly, the Centre for Human Rights should be given the resources it needed. His delegation would comment further in the informal consultations in an effort to promote a consensus.

86. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) asked for an explanation of the relationship between rates of real growth and nominal growth under sections 15 and 28.

87. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the conclusion and recommendation of CPC on section 28, as contained in paragraph 350 of its report (A/46/16).

88. It was so decided.

89. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of $23,489,600 under section 28 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 was approved in first reading, on the understanding that the issues raised in connection with section 28 would be considered in informal consultations and any necessary adjustments made.

90. Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba) said that his delegation could concur in the decision taken only because approval in first reading did not constitute final approval. His delegation reserved the right to discuss all the estimates and recommendations pertaining to section 28 in the informal consultations.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.